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| **Project 2.2.3 Conducting Market Research** |

Introduction

Before you decide to develop a product tosolve a perceived problem, it is advisable to perform direct market research as part of your overall market research effort. Direct market research can help you determine whether your perception of the problem is accurate. If consumers feel that the solution to a problem is not usable or not worth the cost, then the design effort is not justied. The needs and wants of the consumers and users should be evaluated before investing significant time or money into the development of a new product or process.Data gathered first hand from direct observation or feedback gathered verbally or in written form directly from the consumer/user can provide valuable information that can help you estimate the potential market for your solution.

For this project your team will design a market research plan and collect market data about the problem that you intend to solve directly from potential consumers and/or users. As you begin to devise potential solutions to the problem, it may be judicious to perform additional market research to justify specific solution paths.

Equipment

* Engineering notebook
* Pencil

Procedure

Plan and perform direct market research to help define and justify your problem. Then analyze the results of your research in order to determine consumer/user wants and needs. You can choose from different methods to gather market data. No matter your method(s), you should seek information that is directly related to your problem statement and that leads to answers to the following questions:

* What do you need to know in order to design and develop a solution to your chosen problem?
  + - * + We need to know many things in order to develop a solution to our chosen problem. For one we need to know if the problem really does exist in the real world, and what we can do to succeed in the market place with this product. Also, we need to know much about our topic to design and develop a soultion. Thus, we need to have some research and prior knowledge before we start designing our product. Lastly, we should have some ideas for our soultion in order to design and develop a solution. So it is never to late to start working on brainstorming sketches!
* What is the need or want in your problem statement that is causing a problem?
  + - * + The need or want in our problem statement that is causing a problem is the want of people not to pick off gum from their shoes. Thus, we are developing a product that can solve this problem statement.
* What customer(s) will be interested or served by a solution to the problem?
  + - * + The customer(s) that will be interested or served by a solution to the problem are women in the suburban area (city), and shoe makers.
* Is the assumed target market correct, smaller, larger, etc.?
  + - * + We are targetting women the at the age of 16+. Although we hope to have our product be used by any age, our main target audience is young women. Our claim is that women in urban areas mostly encounter this problem of gum stuck on their shoes because they are working in urban environments that require walking. Therefore, to calculate our statistics, we will use population count of women 16 and up; however, we understand most do no live or spend much time in the city so only a portion of that population can be assumed into our calculations.
* Do products exist that already serve as a solution?
  + - * + According to the team's research, there are no products that solve our specific problem. Gum stuck on the ground has been a problem in many places and addressed by several products to try and solve that but not in the way of not sticking to shoes. As evaluated by the research of patents, artifacts and existing similar products, the problem hasn't been addressed from the way that we are approaching it; however, there is competition as there are products out there designed to reduce gum litter. If there is no gum on the ground, it sticking to shoes will not be a problem, and our product would not be of use.
* What competitors affect your solution options?
  + - * + The same goes for competitors as does for their products, since there is no exact approach anyone has taken to reduce the problem of gum sticking to shoes except for the general approach of reducing gum litter. Some competitores that affect our solution options are for example like the Pave-Saver which was found through research, it has the most direct resemblance between existing products and what our team is trying to accomplish.
* What solution characteristics and features are most important?
  + - * + Obviously,any product we introduce must be practical. Aside from this, it is important that it is still fashionable. In my mind, if the product has succeded in both of these fields, then it is/will be successful in general.
* How much would people pay for a solution?
  + - * + We think that the two features that will greatly increase the amount people are willing to pay for our solution is how we advertise it and what the solution actually is. If our solution is a new type of shoe then most people will probably be willing to pay more than if the solution was some type of accessory.
* Is the problem definition adequate or is the problem broader or narrower than the original problem statementindicates?
  + - * + We think that our product could be marketed and used by men as well as women. However we believe that a new kind of flat bottom shoe would be better accepted by women than by men. Basically, the women are still the target audience.

Depending on the data necessary, one or more of the methods described below may be used to meet market research objectives. In order to obtain data that is directly applicable to your project justification, administer your market research to people who can provide useful information. In other words, if you plan to design a method of ankle support for athletes, attempt to limit your administration to athletes and sports medicine professionals. Feedback from a sedentary senior citizen would provide little useable information in this case. Look for opportunities where you can reach a large number of people that will be users or consumers of your product.

Personal Observation

Personal observation puts you in a position to learn more by watching what others do and how they do it. You can also observe processes. If you are observing people, you will obtain better results if you are minimally involved or hidden. If you plan to observe participants in their natural setting, describe the behaviors for which you will be looking. If you will create a scenario and ask participants to perform some specific task, describe the setting, materials and instructions you will provide and make a list of specific behaviors for which you will be looking.

Observe participants in natural setting:

* How they walk
* What shoes they are wearing
* If they are chewing gum
* Is there litter on the city sidewalks
* Are the people walking in a hurry?
* How many people are approximately walking?

Create a Scenario and Ask Participants What They Would Do

* Specific task: Just tell them
* Scenario: You were walking in the city in your nice flat bottom shoes. All of a sudden you get gum stuck to your shoe, what would you do?
* Materials and instructions: A pencil, notebook, and tape recorder to record what they say. The scenario will act as the instructions.
* Specific behaviors we are looking for:
  + How they react when we tell them the scenario
  + Do they add any other comments when you are done telling the scenario, such as “ That happens to me all the time”
  + Are they willing to answer your question thoughtfully
  + The expression they have when we tell them the scenario
  + How they talk (tone, attitude)
  + Their ending expression when you are done with personal observation.

Informational Interviews

You may want to have a structured interview, or you may choose to interview people more casually. Structured interviews can provide more thoughtful answers, but the structure can make the respondent uncomfortable or can cause the respondent to answer in ways they think you want. Casual interviews can provide candid but sometimes less thoughtful answers.

Questions to consider involving in our interviews:

* Do you spend a lot of time walking in the city?
  + - about how much? Daily? Hourly?
* Do you live in the city or commute here for work, school, etc.?
* Do you notice a lot of gum covering the sidewalks?
  + - If yes, do you try to avoid stepping on it?
* Have you ever had gum stuck on the bottom of your shoe?
  + - Was it from walking in the city?
    - How frequently does this happen?
* How did you remove the gum?
  + - or did you leave it there or dispose of the shoe?
* Was it easy or time consuming to remove it?
* What would you prefer it to be like, gum not stick to shoes at all, there not be any gum on the sidewalks or what?
* Do you know if there is anything being done to prevent gum from being disposed on the ground?
  + - how about from sticking to shoes?
    - do you think those products or processes are effective?
* What if there was a product to apply to the bottom of the shoe to prevent gum from sticking?
  + - do you think it would be worth your money and interest?
    - do you know of any existing similar products like that?

Surveys

Surveys are generally the best way to obtain responses from a large number of individuals. You can deliver and retrieve surveys in person, by phone, using the Internet, or by mail. For this course, in-person or online survey tools are probably the best methods.

Focus Groups

Focus groups bring together a small group of people who have been identified as potential buyers and/or users. A facilitator should lead the discussion and keep the group focused. It is best to find participants that the leader does not know.

* Small Group: Women from the suburban area and walk a lot in the city.
* Facilitator: Avani
* Discussion:
  + Do you believe that gum getting stuck to the shoe is a problem in the city?
  + Do you wish there was a product out there that made sure that gum would not be stuck to the shoe at all?
  + Would you by a product like this?
  + What other factors do you wish to incorporate into this product?
  + How often does gum get stuck to your shoe?
  + What do you usually do if gum does get stuck to your shoe?
  + Are you ever in a rush to get to work or another place when this happens?

Designing the Market Research Plan

You may decide that one method or a combination of methods is best used to gather the information you need. Make a written plan for administering your market research that will result in the collection of useful data important to the validation of your problem. Your market research plan should identify the research tools that will be used, the type of respondent targeted, how the research will be administered (i.e. where, mode of administering, collecting and gathering of data, etc.) and when you will conduct the research. After finalizing the design of your market research, have your teacher review your plan, your research tools (surveys/interview questions/etc.) and your expected results.

Tools to be Used: Short, multiple choice surveys, informational surveys with specific people, and focus groups of several people that will involve discussion on the problem to provide deeper insight into the public’s opinions.

Type of Respondent Targeted: Even though our problem statement pertains to women ages 16 and up, we will conduct surveys and interviews on a broader range of people to provide us with more insights and opinions.

Where: City of Chicago within places of leisure such as Starbucks, cafes, parks, ect. According to research the most walkable places in city of Chicago are Printers Row, Near North, Sheridan Park, Old Park, and Dearborn Park.

When: During school time, probably on the weekend

Mode of Administering: distribute surveys on paper in city of Chicago. Take informational interviews at leisure areas.

Collecting and Gathering of Data: We will most likely wait until they finish survey, and the informational interview will be between two people so we have to be there.